<Back |

Can You Hear Me Now?

By Polli Barnes Keller
Gulf Region North

TIKRIT, Iraq- Can you hear me now? If you can, it is because the Information Technology staff is working behind the scenes making our communications go zoom-zoom.

It takes more to rebuild Iraq than just bricks and mortar. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proves daily it is committed to the reconstruction effort by sending its finest employees to support the mission here.

Making Information Technology work in the United States is a mystery to most - trying to make it work in a hostile environment and in a foreign country is a challenge many would never consider and or commit to.

Gary Lowe, Gulf Region North's chief of Information Management and Communications, is the man behind the scene orchestrating the flow of information throughout the northern region. His three years in country and critical knowledge of network infrastructure and processes ensures support of mission essential functions.

Lowe provides leadership to four IT Specialists that work and travel throughout the district keeping communications and IT functions running smoothly. Each with their own area of expertise, these key players risk life and limb in support of the Corps' mission.

Whether flying in a Blackhawk helicopter or traveling in an armored truck convoy with personal bodyguards, Vickey McDonald, Christy Holzclaw, Jason Joseph and Bryon Johnson travel the northern region delivering equipment and providing advisory services to other IT Specialists and top level management of GRN.

McDonald, now serving three years in Iraq, provides districtwide support with a special emphasis on Automated Information System and holds technical responsibility for all aspects of the IT system.

Where McDonald specializes in Automated Information Systems, Christy Holzclaw - also a three-year veteran in theater - provides technical expertise on the Local Area Network. Holzclaw not only supports GRN IT, she is responsible for the total administration of the LAN operating environment for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Global War on Terror area of responsibility.

This area of responsibility includes the Gulf Region North district, the Gulf Region Division in Baghdad, the Afghanistan Engineer District and the entire Transatlantic Programs Center's area of responsibility, which is the Middle East, Africa, Russia and the Central Asian states of the former Soviet Union.

Recently new to the country is Jason Joseph, who joins Bryon Johnson, who has served a year in theater. Joseph specializes in communications support and Johnson specializes in hardware/user support. Both provide a fresh perspective by coming from outside of the Corps, while Johnson's previous one-year tour with GRN provides an important knowledge base and continuity for the IT team.

"I may be a bit biased, but I truly believe this team of IT professionals is the finest in USACE," says Col. Frederick S. Wolf, commander of the Gulf Region North. "They prove it every day as they give their customers superior service, while working in some very inhospitable parts of Iraq."

Note: Polli Barnes Keller is the Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region North. Requests for more information should be directed to Polli at (540) 542-1437. E-mail requests can be sent to CEGRD.PAO@tac01.usace.army.mil. For more information on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq, visit www.grd.usace.army.mil.

Privacy and Security Notice | Contact Us

USACE Home

Div **D**ist **C**tr **L**ab **F**OA

You
Are
Here